

Prekindergarten Education

Laws, Rules, and Realities

EEE/EEI Meeting – 12/11/08

Act 62 – Prekindergarten Education

- Became law on July 1, 2007
- Stipulated that:
 - Prekindergarten education is VOLUNTARY
 - School districts may include children 3-5 years of age in their school census
 - DOE and DCF commissioners “jointly develop and agree to rules” governing pre-K education
- Supported creation of partnerships between schools and private providers
- Established a cap on the number of children districts can count
- Specified parameters for program quality and delineated minimum staff qualifications

Act 132 - Amended Act 62

- Effective July 1, 2008 as an amendment to Act 62
- Extended options for cap adding:
 - total number of enrolled pre-K children who will be eligible to enter K in the following year (operational definition for universal pre-K for 4-year-olds)
 - 1/5 of the total number of children in grades 1-5 included in previous year ADM
- Gave “presumptive 3 STARS” to pre-K programs, both school operated and private programs
- Required DCF & DOE to develop joint rules for STARS
 - Working with stakeholders and STARS Oversight Committee
 - Plan to have public comment on draft rules in January/February
- Delayed effective dates of 2 requirements until 7/1/09:
 - Implementation of the annual pre-K assessment
 - Use of “actual cost template” for negotiating payments for contracts

Highlights of the Prekindergarten Rules

- Before a district ***establishes or expands*** a pre-K program, it must engage the community in a collaborative process to assess:
 - Need and support for pre-K education
 - Estimated number of 3 & 4 year olds
 - Inventory of local private providers
- District shall ***use qualified private providers*** that have the interest and capacity to provide pre-K
- Districts offering pre-K must ***advertise availability*** of pre-K programs to district's families
- Implement a ***non-discriminatory selection method*** when the number who want to participate exceeds the cap or capacity; district can prioritize target populations to meet federal and/or state grant requirements and then use random selection
- ***Parent can request*** district to contract with provider outside of district; ***qualified provider in or outside of the district may ask*** to partner with a district

Highlights of the Prekindergarten Rules

- Establishes ***program quality*** standards:
 - NAEYC Accreditation OR
 - 4 STARS (with at least 2 points in each arena) OR 3 STARS with an approved plan to obtain 4 STARS
 - Curriculum aligned with Vermont Early Learning Standards
- Establishes ***staff qualifications***
 - Licensed in ECE or ECSE if in school-operated pre-k program
 - At least one person in a center-based program must be licensed in ECE or ECSE
 - If family care provider, must be licensed in ECE or ECSE, OR have a minimum of 3 hours/week of supervision from a licensed ECE or ECSE
- Specifies the minimum of what a district's ***contracts*** with private providers must include

Highlights of the Prekindergarten Rules

- Requires ***child assessment*** at the beginning and end of each academic year
 - Choice of 2 assessments:
 - **Work Sampling (WSS) or Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum (CCDC)**
- Requires ***additional financial reporting*** by districts and their partners on costs of pre-K and sources of funding
- Provides parents and providers the ***right of appeal*** on the grounds that the district did not follow the procedural requirements of the statute or rules
- DOE and DCF commissioners will consider appeals jointly
- Pre-K rules went into effect on ***July 1, 2008***

Implications of Act 62 for EEE

- Children on IEP's are not included in a district's cap; they are **in addition to** the cap
- Any early childhood program that was originally established as a "EEE Program" needs to abide by the pre-K rules if the peer models are included in the school census
- If a district needs to use a random selection process for pre-K, then prospective peer models also need to be randomly selected
- The pre-K assessments (WSS or CCDC) will be used as the basis for the Early Childhood Outcomes reporting for children on IEP's who receive 4 or more hours of services per week
- Implementation of the pre-K assessments must begin in 2009-2010 with all children: those on IEP's as well as those not on IEP's

Common misconceptions about school funding and Pre-K

- **Schools get ADM money for the preschoolers they count**
 - **FALSE:** Since Act 68, schools no longer receive a block grant
- **Schools generate money by increasing their ADM count**
 - **FALSE:** No additional money is generated; districts receive the funds their voters have approved spending. An increase in the school census **MAY** lower a district's property tax rate.
- **There's a 3-year lag between claiming ADM and getting the money**
 - **FALSE:** As stated above, districts get the funds their voters have approved. There is a delay before the increased number of children shows up in the tax rate because counts are averaged over the past 2 years.
- **School districts keep a percentage of the ADM money children in private programs generate for coordination, etc.**
 - **FALSE:** There is no "ADM money" hence there is no percentage to keep. There are costs for coordination and other related district activities; these should be included in the district's budget.

Help on implementing Act 62 & Prekindergarten Rules

- DRAFT ***Guide on Implementation of Act 62 and Related Rules*** is available; still a work in progress
 - Draft is currently posted on DOE & DCF websites
 - Final draft will be available on 1/15/09
- Preparation for using ***Child Assessments***
 - Held a Training-of-trainers session on Work Sampling System (WSS) and on Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum (CCDC) Assessment this past summer; 30 trainers in CCDC and 15 trainers in WSS from across the state
 - During the next few months, we will be providing workshops on both assessments in small regional trainings

Who do you call?

■ For technical assistance on pre-K:

- DOE: Manuela Fonseca 828-3850
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■ For technical assistance on EEE:

- Contact Kate Rogers 828-5115
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